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The Apotheosis

A Pointy Hat Cleric Lich

"The journey to becoming an Apotheosis always begins with kindness. Clerics that strive towards lichdom will be the ones that most zealously commit themselves to charity, to alms-giving, to philanthropy. The goal is to become a pillar in the communities they inhabit, and to pass on their message at the time where people are most susceptible to hear it. An Apotheosis cannot exist without followers, because belief and devotion are what make an Apotheosis' existence possible. But a cleric knows how hard it is for a group of people to truly devote themselves to serving someone else, which is why the Apotheosis is a cleric in the first place.

Kindness, charity, and, most importantly, religion are the Trojan horses that a cleric wishing for lichdom uses to form a cult. The god or domain they worship is a means to an end; they add one key ingredient to the doctrine they teach their followers: the cleric themselves. The Apotheosis-to-be positions themselves as the key, and the only way, to truly worship their chosen god. Without the Apotheosis' guiding hand, without the shepherd to lead the sheep, the believers would be helpless, their worship fruitless, their prayers unanswered, and so, a cult is born. A cult with a religious belief and a leader to guide them.

The cleric then works towards entrenching themselves further and further as the sole authority in the cult, and, slowly but surely, shifts more and more of the cult's focus from worshiping a god to worshiping the cleric. Once the cult is devoted in mind, body, and soul to the cleric, the ritual may begin.

A lich cannot be a lich in life, and so the cleric must end theirs in a ritual, alongside their most trusted cultists. These cultists themselves play a key part in said ritual, as their sacrifice is what actually empowers the ritual. The rest of the cult, however, does not sit idly by. Over the course of the establishment of the cult, the cleric must have manipulated their flock into believing, without a shred of doubt, that their leader will come back to life. The cult's belief that their leader is immortal is, in and of itself, what makes a cleric lich immortal. If enough people believe them to be immortal, the cleric will rise again from the ritual as an Apotheosis, a true lich.

An Apotheosis will never truly die as long as enough people believe them to be immortal. Their worshippers are their phylactery, and they are referred to as martyrs.

Upon learning what it takes to create an Apotheosis, one might think that only those clerics devoted to evil deities can ever become such monsters, but there are many stories of clerics devoted to neutral or even good gods who have achieved Apotheosis. There are even whispers among the highest echelons of the most powerful churches that some gods themselves have assisted in the creation of Apotheoses of their own religion. After all, the existence of an Apotheosis ensures that there is an undying cleric highly motivated to spread the worship of the god they chose, potentially forever. The perfect tool to grow a god's influence further and higher than any other."

APOTHEOSIS

Medium Undead, Any Alignment

Armor Class 18 (half plate, shield)
Hit Points 187 (22d8 + 88)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +11, Cha +10
Skills Arcana +8, Insight +11, Perception +11, Persuasion +10, Religion +8
Damage Resistances Cold, Necrotic
Damage Immunities Poison, Radiant; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks
Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages The languages it knew in life
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Blessed Strikes. The Apotheosis inflicts 4d8 additional radiant damage whenever it deals damage by making a melee weapon attack or casting a cantrip.

Channel Immortality (3/day). The Apotheosis can expend a use of this feature to use the action *Turn Living* or use any of the *Channel Divinity* features it knew in life, including those granted by a subclass. Alternatively, it can expend a use of this ability as a use of *Legendary Resistance*. If the Apotheosis fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed it instead.

Cult Phylactery. If any members of the Apotheosis' cult still believe it to be immortal, a destroyed Apotheosis gains a new body after all cult members congregate within 120-feet of each other to perform a mass for the Apotheosis' immortality.

Cult Leader. When the Apotheosis is targeted by an attack, any creature loyal to the Apotheosis that is within 5 feet of it or the attacker can use its reaction to become the target of that attack.

Giveth and Taketh Away. When the Apotheosis uses an action or a bonus action to heal itself or another creature for any amount of hit points, it can choose a creature it can see within 60 feet of it and make a spell attack as part of the same action or bonus action. On a hit, that creature takes radiant damage equal to the hit points the Apotheosis healed.

Magic Resistance. The Apotheosis has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Potent Spellcaster. The Apotheosis adds its Wisdom modifier (+5) to the damage it deals with any cantrip.

Undead Succor. The Apotheosis can be healed by normal healing spells despite being undead.

Spellcasting. The Apotheosis casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as its spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks):

- At will: *bless, bane, command, lesser restoration, remove curse, sacred flame*
- 3/day each: *counterspell, cure wounds (cast at 5th level), healing word (cast at 5th level), inflict wounds (cast at 5th level)*
- 2/day each: *greater restoration, mass cure wounds, spiritual weapon (cast at 5th level), spirit guardians (cast at 5th level)*
- 1/day each: *heal, regenerate, revivify*

Turn Resistance. The Apotheosis has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The Apotheosis makes two attacks with its blessed morningstar. It can then either cast a spell or expend a use of its *Channel Immortality* feature.

Blessed Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) radiant damage.

Channel Immortality: Turn the Living. Each living creature of the Apotheosis' choice that it can see within 30 feet of it must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 19). On a failure, the creature is turned for 1 minute or until it takes damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from the Apotheosis as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of the Apotheosis. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Legendary Actions

The Apotheosis can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Apotheosis regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cantrip. The Apotheosis casts a cantrip.

Weapon. The Apotheosis makes an attack with its blessed morningstar.

Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The Apotheosis casts a spell.

Take My Place (Costs 2 Actions). The Apotheosis swaps positions with a member of its cult loyal to it, not provoking attacks of opportunity.

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